

# Dream the Dreams of God

*99 Ways **YOU** Can End  
Poverty*



*By Sabrina Peña Young*

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<https://sites.google.com/site/howcaniendpoverty/home>

This book is dedicated to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whose dreams of a future where “poverty is history” inspires generations, and to the billions of men, women, and children who suffer each day without clean water to drink, food to eat, or a place to lay their heads.



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# INTRODUCTION

Each day the statistics become more and more staggering. Currently 1 in 8 Americans struggle with hunger, according to Feeding America.org while CNN reports that 1 in 50 children in the United States do not have a place to sleep tonight.<sup>1</sup> Globally the true scope of the poverty pandemic worsens, with UNICEF reporting that 25,000 children die each day of starvation <sup>2</sup> and billions live daily without clean water, sanitation, or a home.

## BUT HOW CAN I HELP?

With the richest nation now struggling with unemployment, hunger, and poverty, addressing needs outside of our own family seems impossible. Yet, there are simple things that you, your family, your friends, your coworkers, your church, and your community can do to end poverty locally, regionally, and someday, globally.

Think about how different your own community would be if 10 people, just 10 people, decided to open up a free food pantry, offer tutoring to at-risk kids, and host a job fair at a local church. Now imagine if you have 20 people volunteering at the local homeless shelter, bringing meals to shut-ins regularly, and offering free childcare for single parents.

Imagine if these 20 people each recruit others to help, leading to 100 volunteers who can offer free psychological counseling, job training, employment, a clothing pantry, ten

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1 “1 in 50 U.S. Children face homelessness.” CNN.com. March 9, 2010. Accessed February 23, 2010.

2 “Poverty Facts and Stats.” Global Issues.org. March 22, 2009. Accessed February 23, 2010.

percent of their income to global missions, university scholarships for needy teens, and even an adoption service. What if those 100 people reach out to 10 more, and then those people reach out to another 10? Soon thousands, even millions, of individuals helping their fellow man unselfishly can transform our world.

We cannot wait for politicians or governments to make a difference and enact real change. Real change happens when each man and woman looks beyond his or her small circle and reaches out to those who have less.

What if we created a world where every man, woman, or child who was hungry or needed a place to sleep could count on their neighbor? What if every time we saw a woman begging for food, a man cold in the snow, or a teen selling themselves on the street, we offered a meal, our jacket, and a listening ear instead of our judgement? What if we loved our neighbor, each day and every day? I believe then we will have a radically different world and truly realize the dreams of God.



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

What follows is 99 Ways that YOU, yes **YOU**, can **end** poverty. If 100 million Americans completed even HALF of the 99 Ways, the world could be radically changed.

I sincerely hope that the 99 ideas listed in this book will inspire you and others to help end poverty. Most are simple ideas like handing out bagged lunches to local homeless veterans or offering free transportation and childcare for a single parent family. Other ideas, such as offering free legal counsel or psychological services, encourage professionals to use their expertise to help struggling families and individuals get back on their feet.

The end of the book has the following materials:

- **The Pledge Sheet**
- **99 Ways Short List**
- **My Top 10 List**

Each of these materials may be copied and distributed non-commercially. The Pledge Sheet gives you a visual reminder of your pledge to end poverty. Fill in the sheet with your name, the date, at least five ways that you are going to help end poverty, and the names of ten other individuals that you will share the 99 Ways Short List with. The Top 10 List gives you an opportunity to add your own ideas to the 99 ideas listed. Share the 99 Ways Short List with your family, friends, community, campus ministry, church, city council, politicians, etc.

I sincerely hope that this book inspires you to help this generation end poverty.



# Dream the Dreams of God

*99 Ways **YOU** Can End Poverty*



# 99 WAYS YOU CAN END POVERTY

**1. Donate socks, shoes, and new underwear.**

Think about what you need on a day to day basis. While many homeless shelters regularly receive donations of used clothing and toys, they rarely receive necessities like socks, shoes, and new undergarments.

**2. Distribute bag lunches.**

When I lived in South Florida, First Lutheran Church in downtown Fort Lauderdale regularly handed out thirty bagged lunches each and every day. Church members donated sandwiches, drinks, and snacks.

**3. Host a homeless dinner weekly.**

Your local church, synagogue, or community center may be able to help the local homeless community with a free dinner one night a week.

**4. Offer bus services to church potlucks.**

Feed shut-ins, the homeless, and the poor in your community spiritually and physically by offering free transportation to church potluck events.

**5. Give away the shirt on your back.**

It may seem simple, but many of us have a closet full of clothes back home to easily replace a jacket or sweater we can give away to a person struggling in the cold.

**6. Invite a hungry family to dinner.**

If you suspect a local family does not have enough food, invite them to your home for dinner.

**7. Pray.**

Never underestimate the power of praying for and

with a stranger in need.

**8. Offer employment.**

If you own a business, look around your community for people in need of a job. You may give someone the ability to keep their home, pay their grocery bills, or take their children to the doctor.

**9. Help with childcare.**

Single parents often give almost half of their income to childcare providers. Offer to babysit a single parent's children.

**10. Host an open pantry.**

Collect canned and boxed food products and store them in a pantry at your local church or community center. Keep it open for those in need, allowing them to fill a grocery bag or two full of free groceries.

**11. Give free after school programs.**

If you are involved in a large church, school, or community program, you may be able to organize free after care for single parents. Keeping children off the streets, offering free tutoring and programming, and giving children a safe place to play will help undermine some of the leading causes of poverty in the United States.

**12. Offer free hair cuts.**

Often, it is only a hair cut and a clean set of clothes that hinders a homeless person's ability to interview well at a job.

**13. Have an open clothes pantry.**

You can set up an open clothes pantry by hosting a clothing drive and then setting up a free thrift shop at a local church or community center.

**14. Offer free medical services.**

If you are a medical professional or have your own practice, donate time to a local charity clinic or begin your own.

**15. Give free legal council.**

If you have experience in legal issues, you may be able to offer free classes and legal advice at your local community center or church.

**16. Offer job training.**

Host a job training seminar at the local homeless shelter or offer it for free locally (providing transportation).

**17. Tutor in English.**

Many legal immigrants struggle with learning the English language. You can help them learn by spending a few hours a week teaching them how to read and write English.

**18. Teach computer skills.**

Many poor children grow up in homes that do not have access to computers. These children grow up at a serious disadvantage. Help tip the scales in their favor by offering free computer training.

**19. Council in basic office skills.**

You can make a difference in someone's life by teaching them skills that make them more marketable in the workplace. Basic office skills like how to use e-mail and computers, how to type, or even how to answer a phone can make a difference for someone who has been out of the workplace for a long period of time.

**20. Get involved in youth programs.**

Many of today's youths find themselves being raised

without the support of a positive role model. You can make a difference in a child's life by mentoring them through the YMCA, Boy Scouts, inner city camps, educational programs, your church, etc.

**21. Donate toiletries to women's shelters.**

Think about basic necessities that women need, like deodorant, feminine napkins, makeup, perfume, hose, or underwear, and donate new items to the local women's shelter.

**22. Donate toys, diapers, and baby essentials to family shelters.**

With many families finding themselves living in homeless shelters, organizations like the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities finds themselves in need of new children and baby items.

**23. Give of your time.**

Even if you are strapped for cash, you can donate your time. An hour a week donated to your local charity will both benefit someone in need and yourself.

**24. Listen.**

Few of us are good active listeners. Be sure to listen, whether it is to a teen in trouble, a homeless woman on the street, or just a friend having a rough day. Just by listening we can let someone know that they are not alone in whatever situation they find themselves in.

**25. Mentor troubled teens.**

Troubled teens often grow up into troubled adults, with higher instances of ending up in jail, dropping out of school, becoming addicted to illegal substances or becoming a parent prematurely. End the cycle by mentoring a troubled teen.



**26. Foster a child.**

The foster program offers qualified families the opportunity to give a troubled child a stable home. While the sacrifice is great, it is well worth it to make a difference in a child's life.

**27. Adopt a child.**

Whether you already have a child or two of your own, find yourself dealing with empty nest syndrome, or never had the opportunity to have a child of your own, if you are stable both financially and emotionally, you can change a child's life forever by adopting a child.

**28. Counsel a troubled teen.**

Be a good example for teens in your life, whether it is your own child, your teenage daughter's friends, or students you may encounter at your job. When they ask you for advice, resist the temptation to brush them off and instead give them mature and appropriate advice.

**29. Report child abuse.**

Too many children suffer from abuse. If you suspect any sort of abuse, report it NOW. Call 1-800-4-A-CHILD to reach the Child Help hotline. You may save a child's life.

**30. Report domestic violence.**

Just as vicious as child abuse is any sort of domestic violence, whether it is of your neighbor, your roommate, your friend, or yourself. Call 1-800-799-SAFE to reach the National Domestic Abuse Hotline.

**31. Donate school supplies.**

Many homeless children attend public schools without basic materials like pencils, paper, or even glue. Donate school supplies to the Salvation Army

and other organizations in your area.

**32. Offer to wash laundry.**

Help out a single parent or shut-in by offering to wash their laundry.

**33. Hand out toothpaste and a toothbrush.**

You can promote good dental hygiene by handing out bagged lunches complete with toothbrush and toothpaste at a local homeless shelter. Good dental hygiene not only helps with employment opportunities, but it prevents disease later in life.

**34. Give out gift cards.**

If you do not feel comfortable giving out cash, you can easily hand out gift cards to local grocery stores, restaurants, or department stores.

**35. Invite a struggling family to dinner.**

Help out a hungry family by inviting them to your home for dinner. Be sure to make plenty of extra food to send home with them. You will enjoy the company and they will enjoy having a full stomach.

**36. Give out water.**

Give out bottled water to the homeless during the hot summer months or to needy families during disaster relief.

**37. Offer free psychological services.**

If you are a qualified counselor, you can make a huge difference in the life of the mentally ill by offering free psychological services.

**38. Write your politicians.**

Write handwritten letters to politicians telling them that you are concerned about how their policies impact the poor in your community. Encourage your

community to do the same.

**39. Become an activist.**

You can advocate for the poor by writing to congress, donating of your resources and time, and becoming a voice for the helpless.

**40. Run for office.**

If you have the financial backing and a penchant for leadership, you can make the most difference by running for office and making changes from inside the system.

**41. Vote.**

No matter what your situation, if you can legally vote, then VOTE! Forget about party lines and vote for candidates that have a record of helping the poor.

**42. Sponsor a child.**

Contribute a set amount per month to sponsor a child overseas. Contact your local church to find legitimate organizations which have a low overhead and give almost 100% of donations to the poor.

**43. Volunteer overseas.**

Peace Corps, mission trips, and organizations like Doctors Without Borders give you the chance to make a difference in someone's life overseas. Moreover, overseas trips will drastically change your perspective.

**44. Volunteer locally.**

If you are limited financially or in time, then volunteer locally with community organizations that help the poor.

**45. Train migrant workers in basic job skills.**

Migrant families suffer a never-ending cycle of

poverty because their children are encouraged to help in the fields instead of attend school. Make a difference in a migrant family's life by teaching them basic job skills, tutoring them in English, and if applicable, helping them to the road to citizenship.

**46. Tutor migrant children.**

Migrant children often do not attend school because they help in the fields and they seldom stay in the same location long enough to complete a school year. Tutor migrant children in math and English to help them break the cycle of poverty.

**47. Donate your car.**

You can help organizations like Cars for Kids by donating your used car.

**48. Give mommy-and-me classes at a local shelter.**

Many homeless parents do not have the opportunity to bond with their children in a safe environment. You can change this by offering free classes in art, music, or crafts to help struggling parents connect with their children in a stress-free environment.

**49. Write about poverty.**

Even if you are not a gifted writer, you can expand awareness of poverty by writing a blog, a book, even just an e-mail, and sharing it with others.

**50. Create art about poverty.**

If you are gifted artistically, you can express your concern about poverty by creating artwork and either donating it to a shelter or community center or use it as a fundraiser by silent auction.

**51. Start a website about poverty.**

You can create a free website about poverty with Wordpress, Google, Blogger, and many other sites.

Add important resources and lists of organizations that help the poor.

**52. Spread the word about poverty.**

Sometimes knowledge opens the floodgates of charity. Be vocal when share how each person can help end poverty with simple tasks.

**53. Put your money where your heart is.**

Even if you can only spare \$10 now and again, teach yourself and your family that monetary sacrifice is worth aiding a family in need.

**54. Protest against social injustice.**

Many of today's dire social conditions are created by greedy lobbyists, politicians, and corporations that see nothing wrong with robbing common people of their freedom, dignity, and home. Speak out next time you hear about a developer tearing down much-needed public housing or local politicians once again ignoring the needs of veterans and the elderly in order to fill their own coffers. Social injustice can involve anything from violent crimes to discrimination to unfair legislation.

**55. Write a letter to the editor.**

Correspond with the local media outlets about ways the community can fight poverty and social injustice.

**56. Blog about poverty.**

Even if you only have a little bit of insight about poverty, you can make a difference by blogging about organizations that help the poor.

**57. Podcast about poverty.**

If you have vocal talent, you can create a podcast about poverty awareness that can focus on charities, ways to help the poor, and individual stories.

**58. Pay the rent for a poor family.**

You may be able to help a struggling family keep their home for one more month during a rough patch.

**59. Bring dinner to a shut-in.**

Many of us forget about the elderly and the ill. Bring lunch or dinner to a shut-in and stick around for wonderful conversation.

**60. Offer companionship to the elderly.**

Not everyone is fortunate enough to have family close by. Make a difference in an elderly person's life by visiting them, calling them, and spending quality time with them.

**61. Take a shut-in to the doctor.**

Show that you care by offering transportation and moral support for doctor and hospital visits.

**62. Check in on your neighbors.**

Sometimes someone in need could be living next door to you. Be aware and be a good neighbor.

**63. Offer free housing.**

Offer a spare room in the home to someone that needs a little bit of help getting on their feet. I was fortunate to receive help during a dark time in my life, and it changed my life forever.

**64. Help a child with their homework.**

Though simple, helping a child, your own or someone else's, may make the difference between a child succeeding in school.

**65. Bring dinner to a veteran.**

Veterans have sacrificed so much for our nation. Many return home with physical and emotional

ailments which prevent them from returning to daily life. Help out by bringing dinner and being a friend to the friendless.

**66. Lend a listening ear to a depressed friend.**

Just by listening you can make a difference in someone's life.

**67. Organize a food drive.**

Whether you are organizing a food drive for disaster victims, the local pregnancy help center, or elderly in your neighborhood, you can easily organize a food drive through a school, your church, the community center, or even in conjunction with the local grocery store.

**68. Organize a clothing drive.**

Almost everyone has some clothing that they know longer need. Organize a clothing drive of "gently used" clothing for the area shelter.

**69. Host a local job fair.**

With unemployment hovering in the double digits, organizing a local job fair may help employers boost the local economy by hiring people from your community.

**70. Prepare the unemployed for job interviews.**

Being away from the job market for any significant amount of time seriously limits a person's job prospects. Help fight unemployment at the ground level by helping interviewees work on basic interview skills like phone etiquette, putting together a good portfolio, and computer skills.

**71. Offer free resume' services.**

Resume' styles change drastically from one year to the next. You can help someone who has been

unemployed for a long period of time by reformatting their resume' and helping them create a cover letter for the contemporary workplace.

**72. Share your story.**

Whether you triumphed over poverty personally, learned valuable lessons through volunteer work, or even can offer a tiny glimmer of hope to someone in emotional or economic despair, learn the power of your own personal story. We all have something valuable to share.

**73. Pay someone's medical bill.**

Many people have to make the daily choice between buying necessities like groceries or paying medical costs. You can help by paying someone's medical bill or helping them financially with other medical expenses like medicine or therapy.

**74. Have a “free” yard sale.**

Host a “free” yard sale with your neighbors. You will be surprised at how many families will be able to use your old clothing, furniture, and other items.

**75. Host a fundraiser for a local shelter.**

Visit your local homeless shelter or pregnancy help center and help set up a fundraiser for them. It can be anything from a telethon to a t-shirt sale to a bake sale or car wash.

**76. Make a film about poverty.**

Nowadays a cell phone is all you need to post a short film about poverty. Become a citizen reporter and bring to light the poverty epidemic through film.

**77. Have a free church flea market.**

Host a free church flea market where everyone drops off items and can pick up items at no charge.



Be sure to advertise the free church flea market locally, especially poorer areas and at charities.

**78. Host a battle of the bands as a fundraiser.**

If you and your friends have some musical talent, you can have a concert or battle of the bands fundraiser for your favorite charity.

**79. Pray for the oppressed.**

Never, never underestimate the power of prayer.

**80. Give away a prayer, hope, and a meal.**

Provide hope and sustenance both spiritually and physically.

**81. Sponsor a child's education.**

Whether the child is from inner city Chicago or in war torn Rwanda, help a child rise above adversity by giving them the gift of education.

**82. Donate to disaster relief.**

Give resources to disaster relief efforts long after the media hype has gone.

**83. Volunteer for disaster relief.**

Give of your time and your talents when disaster strikes.

**84. Bring a Christmas or birthday gift to a shut-in.**

Show that they have not been forgotten. Bring gifts and a meal to the sick and elderly.

**85. Donate clothes and necessities to overseas missions.**

Many overseas missions help from the inside, providing medical clinics, meals, education, orphanages and other practical needs of poor communities. Help by donating clothes and

necessities to overseas missions.

**86. Volunteer at an AIDS clinic.**

Help those afflicted with HIV by providing a helping hand and a warm smile.

**87. Volunteer at a pregnancy help center.**

Help struggling young mothers overcome adversity by mentoring and volunteering at a local pregnancy help center or hosting a pregnant teen at your home.

**88. Love your family.**

End poverty at your own doorstep by always providing love and forgiveness to your own family.

**89. Buy groceries for a needy family.**

Anonymously donate a box of groceries to a needy family in your neighborhood or church.

**90. Offer a free transportation.**

If you have a car, offer free transportation to doctor appointments, the grocery store, school, work, etc. to persons who do not have a car or cannot drive.

**91. Fundraise for a local shelter with a marathon.**

Hosting a marathon or other athletic event can bring awareness and extra support for area shelters and community organizations.

**92. Donate your Christmas presents to a shelter.**

Give or purchase gifts to the local shelter. Do not forget about gifts we often take for granted like a new pair of children's pajamas, socks, toiletries, or even a baby blanket.

**93. Hire the unemployed for odd jobs.**

Help the unemployed by hiring them for odd jobs around the house to help pay basic bills like

groceries or utilities.

**94. Help an immigrant family.**

Whether you help an immigrant family by teaching them the native language, helping them gain citizenship, taking their kids to school, or simply employing them, you are helping the next generation of productive citizens rise above the poverty plaguing immigrants in our country.

**95. Invite shut-ins to your family gatherings.**

Prevent unnecessary loneliness in the elderly by inviting shut-ins to your family gathering. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have family nearby. Let your family become their family.

**96. Give 10% of everything to charity.**

Whether you give 10% of your time, your resources, or even your groceries to charity, you will find that the difference you make with that 10% is well worth the personal sacrifice.

**97. Practice kindness.**

It seems basic, but often kindness is mistaken for weakness. Fight this notion by being kind and helping others, no matter what the cost.

**98. Love your neighbor.**

Such a basic tenet can prevent a world of war. Help your neighbor, whether it is your neighbor next door, the homeless woman on the street, or the poor child in a foreign land.

**99. Do 10 things on the list this week and spread the word.**

Avoid apathy and commit to completing 10 items on this list this week and every week of your life, then spread the word!

# CONCLUSION

My hope is that 99 Ways will encourage you and others to make a real difference in the world today. Spread the word, spread the 99 Ways, and we **can** defeat poverty.

# PLEDGE SHEET

(The 99 Ways Pledge Sheet may be copied as needed)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

I pledge to end poverty by:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

I will share the 99 Ways Short List with:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_

Today I will:

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## **99 SHORT LIST**

(This list may be copied as needed non-commercially)

1. Donate socks, shoes, and new underwear.
2. Distribute bag lunches.
3. Host a homeless dinner weekly.
4. Offer bus services to church potlucks.
5. Give away the shirt on your back.
6. Invite a hungry family to dinner.
7. Pray.
8. Offer employment.
9. Help with childcare.
10. Host an open pantry.
11. Give free after school programs.
12. Offer free hair cuts.
13. Have an open clothes pantry.
14. Offer free medical services.
15. Give free legal council.
16. Offer job training.
17. Tutor in English.
18. Teach computer skills.
19. Council in basic office skills.
20. Get involved in youth programs.
21. Donate toiletries to women's shelters.
22. Donate toys, diapers, and baby essentials to family shelters.
23. Give of your time.
24. Listen.
25. Mentor troubled teens.
26. Foster a child.
27. Adopt a child.
28. Counsel a troubled teen.
29. Report child abuse.
30. Report domestic violence.
31. Donate school supplies
32. Offer to wash laundry.
33. Hand out toothpaste and a toothbrush.

34. Give out gift cards.
35. Invite a struggling family to dinner.
36. Give out water.
37. Offer free psychological services.
38. Write your politicians.
39. Become an activist.
40. Run for office.
41. Vote.
42. Sponsor a child.
43. Volunteer overseas.
44. Volunteer locally.
45. Train migrant workers in basic job skills.
46. Tutor migrant children.
47. Donate your car.
48. Give mommy-and-me classes at a local shelter.
49. Write about poverty.
50. Create art about poverty.
51. Start a website about poverty.
52. Spread the word about poverty.
53. Put your money where your heart is.
54. Protest against social injustice.
55. Write a letter to the editor.
56. Blog about poverty.
57. Podcast about poverty.
58. Pay the rent for a poor family.
59. Bring dinner to a shut-in.
60. Offer companionship to the elderly.
61. Take a shut-in to the doctor.
62. Check in on your neighbors.
63. Offer free housing.
64. Help a child with their homework.
65. Bring dinner to a veteran.
66. Lend a listening ear to a depressed friend.
67. Organize a food drive.
68. Organize a clothing drive.
69. Host a local job fair.
70. Prepare the unemployed for job interviews.
71. Offer free resume' services.

72. Share your story.
73. Pay someone's medical bill.
74. Have a "free" yard sale.
75. Host a fundraiser for a local shelter.
76. Make a film about poverty.
77. Have a free church flea market.
78. Host a battle of the bands as a fundraiser.
79. Pray for the oppressed.
80. Give away a Bible, hope, and a meal.
81. Sponsor a child's education.
82. Donate to disaster relief.
83. Volunteer for disaster relief.
84. Bring a Christmas or birthday gift to a shut-in.
85. Donate clothes and necessities to overseas missions.
86. Volunteer at an AIDS clinic.
87. Volunteer at a pregnancy help center.
88. Love your family.
89. Buy groceries for a needy family.
90. Offer a free transportation.
91. Fundraise for a local shelter with a marathon.
92. Donate your Christmas presents to a shelter.
93. Hire the unemployed for odd jobs.
94. Help an immigrant family.
95. Invite shut-ins to your family gatherings.
96. Give 10% of everything to charity.
97. Practice kindness.
98. Love your neighbor.
99. Do 10 things to end poverty this week and spread the word.



# MY TOP 10 LIST

**10 Ways That YOU Can Stop Poverty**  
Add your own ten ideas to the 99 Ways.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Sabrina Peña Young worked with South Florida inner city, homeless, and at-risk youths for ten years at inner city art camps, programs for homeless children, schools for at-risk children, and urban ministry with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship in Tampa, Florida. Young taught for three years with the nationally recognized ArtREACH program, hosted by the Young at Art Children's Museum, which has helped hundreds of homeless children and their families through free childcare and arts programming. Currently Young resides in Western Kentucky and teaches at Murray State University.

